

**TOWN OF DAVIE
WORKSHOP MEETING
AUGUST 26, 2003**

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. Present were Mayor Truex, Vice-Mayor Starkey, Councilmembers Crowley, Hubert and Paul. Also present were Town Administrator Willi, Town Attorney Kiar, and Town Clerk Muniz recording the meeting.

Scott Spages, Budget Advisory Committee member, read a memo from the Committee updating Council on four key recommendations. The first was that the fire assessment fee be lowered to roughly half of what had been proposed. The second was that donations for non-profit organizations be eliminated. The third was a request that a study be done costing no more than \$25,000 to examine space needs for Town hall operations, to be funded either through the elimination of the donations budget or through the Town Administrator. The fourth item the Committee suggested focusing efforts on reducing funding in four areas - Human Resources, Town Clerk's Office, Parks and Recreation, and Development Services. Mr. Spages stated that these areas were chosen because they had large budget increases in the previous year and some Committee members felt other areas of the Town were of a higher priority.

Mayor Truex wanted to know where the Town was with a space study. Assistant Town Administrator Ken Cohen explained that there was some funding in progress.

Mr. Cohen explained that the hiring dates for new Fire Department hires would be moved to 2004 as an effort to reduce fire assessment costs. He further explained that there was approximately \$181,000 in expenses that currently exceeded revenues. Mr. Cohen also addressed the \$600,000 in cuts recommended by the Committee. He spoke against eliminating services to the community and felt that an across the board reduction would be more effective, rather than selecting a few departments to bear the brunt of these cuts. Mr. Cohen discussed personnel upgrades and promotions and indicated that if funding could be realized, then these promotions and upgrades would be presented at the first public hearing to Council.

Mayor Truex asked about the additional sources of income. Mr. Cohen felt that the figure would probably be in the six-figure range, but was hesitant to elaborate as no contracts had been signed at the time.

Councilmember Paul asked about the 1.75% cut across the board and questioned whether Police and Fire would be included. Mr. Cohen indicated that only the operating expenses would be affected by the cut. He indicated that the major portion of the budget was for the upcoming election and pointed out that election costs would be expected soon.

Mr. Cohen indicated that other cities were having serious problems and placing a hiring freeze for positions. He explained that in those cities, even though the positions were budgeted, keeping them open for a month was a strategy which would allow the money to fall out and help balance their budgets quickly. Mr. Cohen indicated that this was an option for Council to consider.

Mayor Truex asked at what point the Town would know where things stood. Mr. Cohen indicated that the Town would know its position after the first quarter. Mayor Truex asked that this issue be agendaized for a meeting three months from the workshop date.

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Councilmember Crowley asked if any options were available for the small businesses which appeared to be negatively affected. Mr. Cohen indicated that this issue was looked at every year. He stated that there was not much flexibility with the formula used and that the formula had been court tested. Mr. Crowley asked if these increases could be funded through a millage increase. Mr. Cohen stated that an 18% increase would be needed to cover the costs and explained the methodology behind the formula currently being used. Mr. Crowley asked if there were any way to cut from the Capital Budget and asked if it included millage. Mr. Cohen indicated in the negative.

Mayor Truex asked if some items in the Capital Budget were not bonded. Mr. Cohen agreed and felt that Council could re-evaluate and remove some items if it so chose.

Vice-Mayor Starkey indicated that on the chart handed out by Mr. Cohen, the Town was in the third position from the bottom, compared to other cities, and felt that the Town should be more in the mid-range assessment. She stated that if the Town took the mid-range position now, then next year the Town could move up incrementally to a gradual increase. She asked Mr. Cohen if he had a breakdown of each dollar increment increase. Mr. Cohen indicated that every dollar of the \$58 generated approximately \$47,000 in revenue.

Councilmember Hubert asked if the collection of assessments was always done this way. Mr. Cohen indicated that it had been done this way since 1996 and prior to that, there were assessments done by Broward County. Councilmember Hubert asked how much it would cost each resident to take the amount needed and split it equally among each resident - without the businesses. Mr. Cohen indicated that based on his calculations, it would be \$83 per resident. Councilmember Hubert stated that many small businesses were having trouble keeping their heads above water. Mr. Cohen indicated that previously, the formula allowed shifting some of the burden to the larger businesses, but that the current formula did not allow the Town to eliminate commercial charges.

Mayor Truex suggested that if the Town were going to get rid of the Fire Assessment, then it would be difficult and impractical to do it within the current year. He felt it should be taken up as a goal for the next year. Mayor Truex asked if Council agreed that if this were to be abolished, that it be done at the goal setting next year. He further suggested that the Budget Advisory Committee develop a Plan A and a Plan B to cover all options - not only the cuts. Mr. Cohen indicated that the Committee could look at the departments mentioned to see what type of cuts would work.

Mr. Willi explained how the hiring process for public safety personnel would automatically generate fallout.

Councilmember Paul agreed that the suggestion by Mr. Cohen for a 1.75% decrease in operating expense was the most effective. She reminded Council that in previous years, the Town always found some ways to cut costs without raising the millage rate. Councilmember Paul was concerned that at some time in the future, a large expense might be needed and the Town may not be able to provide the proper level of service. She asked if there was any way to look at the formula again to try to make it more fair across the board without having such an impact on small businesses. Mr. Cohen indicated that the Committee could look into Councilmember Paul's suggestion.

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Mayor Truex stated that the Fire Assessment should be reviewed every year. He indicated the he did not have a problem reviewing the assessment nickel by nickel every year. Mayor Truex clarified that Council wanted this item put on the agenda for the Town's Goal Setting Workshop.

Councilmember Hubert asked if the Town was allowed to ask the residents how they felt about paying the \$83. Mayor Truex reiterated that the option offered by Mr. Cohen was the most reasonable, but expressed a desire to see an optional plan. Councilmember Hubert asked how the small businesses would be affected. Mr. Cohen indicated that small businesses would see a rate increase.

Councilmember Crowley felt that all the changes recommended by the Committee were okay except for cutting the non-profit donations.

Vice-Mayor Starkey asked for some kind of documentation showing the options discussed for the Town and what it would mean to those departments that would get cuts. Mr. Cohen agreed to prepare a spreadsheet.

Mayor Truex agreed with Councilmember Crowley that donations for charities should not be cut. He explained the requests that were made by the charities listing.

Vice-Mayor Starkey asked why that figure was not increased. She felt Family Central provided a lot of services to families and pointed out that they leverage a lot of money the Town received. Councilmember Paul clarified that even though the services differed, the Town had to look at the impact on the community. She pointed out that Council had previously agreed that Hope Outreach provided similar services as Family Central. Vice-Mayor Starkey stated that the two services were similar in level of importance to the community.

Mr. Crowley stated that he was in favor of keeping the donation amount the same.

Councilmember Paul pointed out that Council had to go along with the Committee. Vice-Mayor Starkey indicated she would go along with what Council decided.

Mayor Truex continued outlining donations received by individual charities. Councilmembers were in agreement with these amounts.

Regarding Broward Gold Coast Down Syndrome, Vice-Mayor Starkey asked if the Town had ever received a breakdown on how money was spent for which showed the criteria for how many Davie children were being serviced by the organization. Mr. Cohen indicated in the negative.

Vice-Mayor Starkey pointed out that there were many requests the Town received from residents asking for funding to help other services, but she did not want to stray too far from any pre-determined criteria. Mr. Cohen stated that there was no formula or any particular criteria for how funding was distributed among Davie residents. Vice-Mayor Starkey voiced her concern about groups requesting help when there were many Davie children who needed help.

Mayor Truex stated that in the future Broward Gold Coast Down Syndrome Charity should follow the same process that every other charity followed by indicating how many Davie residents were served by the Town.

Councilmember Paul reminded Council that she had previously asked for a breakdown that showed funding for the Boy's and Girl's Club of Broward.

Mayor Truex asked if anyone wished to make public comment. No one spoke.

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Mayor Truex stated that the Police Athletic League (PAL) received \$95,000, and was budgeted at \$95,000. Officer Robert Spence, representing PAL, distributed a quarterly report from the PAL Board of Directors, outlining its expenses.

Councilmember Crowley wished to see the program remain the same as in previous years.

Councilmember Paul asked how many employees PAL currently had. Officer Spence responded that currently, there were five employees.

Geri Clark, president of PAL, asked Council to continue to support the PAL and pointed out that PAL was a nationwide program, not limited to the Town. She asked Officer Spence how many children had been serviced by PAL in the last eight months. Officer Spence responded that approximately 800.

Councilmember Crowley asked if Council could receive the quarterly report received by the PAL Board of Directors.

Ms. Clark announced that she wanted the program to grow and questioned if the in-kind donation of Town staff would change the PAL program. She questioned whether one change in the rules would not produce a domino effect on the whole program.

Mayor Truex asked if Council wished to give the PAL \$95,000. Councilmember Hubert questioned who else gave PAL money besides the Town. Officer Spence estimated that in 2001, PAL received about \$12,000 in private donations. Ms. Clark gave an update on the PAL Board of Director's fundraising efforts.

Councilmember Hubert asked Mr. Willi if he had an update on her request on the Town's costs to sponsor PAL at its current location. Mr. Willi indicated that last year, it cost the Town \$56,000 in FPL costs and \$900 in phone service. Councilmember Hubert asked if instead of giving them a lump sum of \$95,000, that Council break down the costs by the activities proposed.

Councilmember Paul said she was thankful that Ms. Clark was president of PAL. She stated that she was pleased to hear that PAL had a fundraising Committee because she felt it would ensure its long-term success by becoming self-sustaining.

Ms. Clark offered to give an update to Council periodically. Council agreed that this was a good idea and felt that this should occur every even-numbered month, along with the other presentations.

Mr. Spages spoke against charitable donations in general and felt that PAL and other organizations should be "weaned" off the donations.

Vice-Mayor Starkey felt that there were more "hiccups" in the development of PAL. She wanted more accountability from the PAL program and felt that PAL should be self-sufficient.

Cindy Osbourne stated that one of the Davie Merchants and Industrial Association members was a past president of PAL and indicated that she was proud to see its growth.

Ms. Clark felt the program was still in its infancy and changing it may undermine its success.

Councilmember Crowley was in favor of the \$95,000, but wanted to see quarterly reports. Mayor Truex agreed with the idea of the quarterly reports.

Vice-Mayor Starkey felt there should be a "weaning off" plan provided by the PAL.

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Councilmember Hubert asked if PAL was targeting more neighborhoods and reaching out to more kids. Officer Spence indicated that Palma Nova had been the focus but that they were considering expanding efforts to attract residents of the east side but there were budget constraints.

Mayor Truex asked if everyone on Council was in favor of the \$95,000. All were in favor except for Vice-Mayor Starkey, who offered approval with the caveat that the dollars be broken down on what programs were being offered. Council agreed to give the full \$95,000.

Ms. Osbourne offered a counterproposal to the Fire Assessment that would place more of the burden on the "million dollar homeowners". She felt that the current proposed rate was an atrocity and the current four business classes should be condensed into one to level the playing field.

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Truex adjourned the meeting at 8:23 p.m.

Approved _____

Mayor/Councilmember

Town Clerk

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